

## Faith and Order Committee Report to Methodist Council 2017

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<b>Status of Paper</b>	Final
<b>Resolution</b>	58/1. The Council receives the report.

### Summary of Content

<b>Subject and Aims</b>	The work of the Faith and Order Committee 2016-2017
<b>Main Points</b>	Ways of working Responses required by previous Conferences Scrutiny and consultation work Work being brought to Conferences 2017 and 2018
<b>Background Context and Relevant Documents (with function)</b>	The Faith and Order Committee reports to the Methodist Conference, and annually provides a briefer report to the Council.

## The Work of the Faith and Order Committee 2016-2017

The Faith and Order Committee offers theological consultation for work being conducted throughout the Connexion, and theological scrutiny for the work of the Conference and the Connexional Team. A Connexion-wide network of Methodist people, who volunteer their skills and expertise, supports the Committee in its work. The Committee drafts, scrutinises and comments on reports from its own members or from other parts of the Methodist Church, makes recommendations to Council and Conference, offers advice on issues related to the Faith and Order of the Methodist Church, and reports directly to the Methodist Conference.

In this report, the Committee outlines the main areas in which it has been working during the present Connexional year and the main items which it intends to bring to the Conference in 2017 and 2018.

### 1. Ways of Working

- 1.1 The Committee has met three times since the 2016 Conference: in September for a day meeting; in November for a 24-hour residential meeting; and in March for a 24-hour residential meeting. The Faith and Order Executive is appointed to make some decisions on behalf of the Committee between meetings. The Committee continues to pay attention to its ways of working in order to provide a theologically rich, robust and also cost-effective way of fulfilling the remit of the Committee under Standing Order 330.
- 1.2 The Liturgical Sub-Committee meets according to need, and utilises electronic ways of working.
- 1.3 A Joint Subgroup, appointed by the faith and order bodies of the Methodist Church and the Church of England, continues to take forward the work on ministry and oversight.
- 1.4 All reports, questions and communication to the Committee should be sent in the first instance to the Secretary of the Committee. The Committee has agreed a protocol for Faith and Order representation and consultation. As a general principle no one speaks on behalf of the Faith and Order Committee, except for the Secretary, unless they are specifically authorised to do so. Whilst those representing the Faith and Order Committee on other bodies cannot act on behalf of the Committee they shall endeavour to: articulate faith and order perspectives and highlight questions and concerns as appropriate; encourage a shared engagement in theological reflection; liaise with the Secretary of the Faith and Order Committee; and make reports or raise issues with the Committee as required.
- 1.5 The appointment of the Faith and Order Committee is the responsibility of the Methodist Conference. The Committee expresses its thanks to those members who will be standing down from Committee membership at the end of this connexional year.

### 2. Responses required by previous Conferences

- 2.1 The *Issues of Connexionalism* report was commended for study and reflection by the 2015 Conference and a revised report will be brought to the 2017 Conference as a result of feedback received.
- 2.2 The 2015 Conference directed the committee to “undertake a major review of the theological foundation of all matters of ministerial remuneration and to report to the Conference of 2017” (Resolution 46/4). The results of these reflections will be brought to the 2017 Conference as part of the report from the Connexional Allowances Committee.

### **3. Scrutiny and Consultancy Work**

- 3.1 The Committee has engaged with various issues, projects and Council papers, providing specific responses to paperwork, continuing involvement in the support of working groups, or commentary on the development of reports. Where appropriate, specific responses have been sent directly to the authors of reports, or to those providing the lead in relevant areas of work.
- 3.2 Under SO 330(10) the Faith and Order Committee has a specific role in scrutinising all matters directly concerning the faith and order of the Church presented to the Conference by other bodies. Such scrutiny requires consultation with the full committee, and often some collaborative working, and the Committee is therefore grateful for early conversations to establish effective and constructive ways of working and reflecting as the work develops.
- 3.3 The Committee continues to reflect on how it might best support members of the Connexional Team, and those undertaking work (individuals and working parties) on behalf of the Methodist Council and the Conference, to think about how their work might be theologically resourced and what it means to reflect theologically in the context of the Methodist Church in Britain.
- 3.4 The Committee continues to consider how it might best work with others in order to fulfil its remit under SO 330(3) to “seek to stimulate theological reflection and study throughout the Church”, and will continue to give this attention during the next connexional year.

### **4. Work being brought to Conferences 2017 and 2018**

The Faith and Order Committee’s reports to the Conferences of 2017 and 2018 will include the following pieces of work:

Conference 2017:

- Issues of Connexionalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Conference 2018:

- Ministry in the Methodist Church
- Theology and Ecclesiology Underpinning the Diaconate (including the Liturgical Role of Deacons)
- Report of the faith and order bodies of the Methodist Church and the Church of England on oversight and ministry
- Holy Communion Mediated Through Social Media
- A response to *The Call to Holiness: From Glory to Glory (2016)* the tenth report from the Joint International Commission for dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the Roman Catholic Church

### **\*\*\*RESOLUTION**

**58/1 The Council receives the report.**